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Social and human rights questions: human rights

Programme budget implications of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its forty-second and forty-third sessions

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

I. Introduction

1. In the report on its forty-second and forty-third sessions,[1] the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended a decision for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

2. At the forty-third session of the Committee the Secretariat did not have the opportunity to submit a statement of the programme budget implications of the decision recommended by the Committee for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with rule 23 of the Committee's rules of procedure. Therefore, in the present report, and in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council, the Council's attention is drawn to the programme budget implications of the decision recommended by the Committee in its report.[2]

II. Draft decision of the Committee

3. Under the terms of the draft decision of the Committee,[2] the Economic and Social Council, concerned that existing arrangements for the meetings of the Committee no longer permit it to fully discharge its responsibilities under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Council

[1] E/2010/22.
[2] Ibid., chap. I, para. 4.

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resolution 1985/17 in an efficient and timely manner, and noting that the present backlog in its consideration of the reports of State parties could be effectively dealt with through additional sessions, would approve the convening of an additional session of the Committee, followed by meetings of the pre-sessional working groups of one week's duration, in Geneva, in both 2011 and 2012.

III. Activities by which the proposed decision would be carried out

4. At its forty-third session in November 2009, the Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights reiterated its concern over the persistent backlog of reports awaiting consideration (an average of approximately 35 reports). In light of the fact that the Committee only meets twice a year, it felt severely constrained in its efforts to reduce the backlog and thus to consider the periodic reports of State parties in a timely manner. In order to reduce the persistent backlog of reports of the Committee, it is estimated that one additional session per year should be held during the period 2011-2012. The additional session would include three weeks (15 working days) for each session followed by one week (5 working days) for the meetings of each pre-sessional working group in 2011 and 2012.

5. The additional sessions in 2011 and 2012 would allow the Committee to consider approximately six additional reports per year, and thus to increase the number of reports considered annually by 25 per cent, which would alleviate a further growth of the current backlog and allow the Committee to consider reports in a timely manner.

6. The above activities fall under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, section 23, Human rights, and section 28E, Administration, Geneva, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

7. Should the Economic and Social Council adopt the draft decision recommended by the Committee the additional sessions of the Committee would require interpretation services in all official languages, as well as summary records for all the additional sessions. Each additional session would require an additional 930 pages of pre-session documentation, 150 pages of in-session documentation and 120 pages of post-session documentation in all six official languages per year.

8. In addition to the conference-servicing activities referred to in paragraph 7 above, provision would also have to be made for the travel and per-diem costs for the members of the Committee as follows: (a) additional session (15 working days per year for 18 members); and (b) additional meetings of the pre-sessional working group (5 working days per year for five members).

9. It is also anticipated that additional staffing requirements would arise in order to provide the Committee with the necessary support, including research, analysis of the reports of States parties, drafting of documents required for the session and assistance during the session. The workload for the additional tasks is estimated at 220 working days per year, for which an additional professional staff (P-3 level) for 12 work months for 2011 and 2012 would be required.

10. The additional requirements are enumerated in the table following paragraph 11 below. Since these requirements are new and are not included in the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, additional appropriations would be

required for 2011 in the current biennium. Requirements related to 2012 will be taken into consideration in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

IV. Additional requirements for the biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013

11. Should the Economic and Social Council adopt the draft decision, the additional requirements for travel, daily subsistence allowance, terminal expenses, staff costs and conference servicing costs, at full cost, are estimated at $2,490,100 for 2011 and $2,490,100 for 2012, as described in the table below.

Additional requirements

(United States dollars)

	2011	*2012*	*Total cost for 2011 and 2012*
Section 23 **Human rights**			
Staff cost of 1 P-3	181 600[a]	181 600	363 200
One additional session cost (travel and daily subsistence allowance)	250 900	250 900	501 800
Section 2 **General Assembly and Economic and Social affairs and conference management**			
Meeting servicing, interpretation and documentation	2 043 900	2 043 900	4 087 800
Section 28 E **Administration, Geneva**	13 700	13 700	27 400
Section 36 **Staff assessment**	21 200	21 200	42 400
Income section 1 **Income from staff assessment**	(21 200)	(21 200)	(42 400)
Total	**2 490 100**	**2 490 100**	**4 980 200**

[a] Proposed for absorption in 2011.

V. Potential for absorption during the biennium 2010-2011 and estimated requirements for the biennium 2012-2013

12. There are no provisions in the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 to finance the additional requirements for travel of the members of the Committee or support staff nor for the related conference-servicing for the additional session to be held in 2011. It is proposed that the estimated requirements of $181,600 required for an additional professional staff (P-3 level), under general temporary assistance, under section 23, Human rights, as well as requirements of $21,200 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under Income section 1, Income from staff assessment, be met from within available resources

approved for the biennium 2010-2011. Therefore, the remainder of the additional resources, estimated at a total amount of $2,308,500, to be sought from the General Assembly under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 relate to the following: (a) section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, for conference services ($2,043,900); (b) section 23, Human rights, for travel of members of the Committee ($250,900); and (c) section 28E, Administration, Geneva ($13,700).

13. For the biennium 2012-2013, the estimated net requirements of $2,490,100, including $2,043,900 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; $432,500 under section 23, Human rights; $13,700 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva; and $21,200 under section 36, staff assessment, to be offset by equivalent amount under Income section 1, Income from staff assessment, will be addressed in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

14. Consequently, should the Council adopt the draft decision, an additional appropriation in the total amount of $2,308,500 would be required under sections 2 ($2,043,900), 23 ($250,900) and 28E ($13,700) over and above the resources approved for the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

VI. Contingency fund

15. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under that procedure, if additional expenditure are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

16. It is not possible at this stage to identify activities under sections 2, 23 and 28E of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 that could be curtailed, deferred, terminated or modified in order to meet the remainder of the net additional requirement of $2,308,500. From a preliminary review, the Secretariat believes that it is possible that the estimated amount of $181,600 for the support staff required for the Committee could be absorbed within the approved appropriation of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011. Although absorption is not foreseen at this time, the Secretariat will seek, over the coming months, to identify areas from which further resources can be redeployed to meet the requirements for the Committee in the biennium 2010-2011 and will inform the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session of how to meet the remainder of the additional requirements in the context of the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2010.

VII. Conclusion

17. **Should the Economic and Social Council adopt the draft decision contained in the report of the Committee on its forty-second and forty-third sessions,[2] additional resources totalling $2,308,500 would be required, under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, as enumerated in paragraph 13 above. The requirements for the biennium 2012-2013 in the total amount of $2,490,100 enumerated in the table above will be addressed in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.**